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Mexican Tour a Mecca for Art Lovers and Students of Research

COMPARATIVELY few Americans even among the best informed, are aware of the fact that within two and a half days' travel from the center of the United States one may reach as interesting cities of a foreign country as days or even weeks of ocean voyage might bring them to; and better still, the traveler is not deprived of the luxury of our own modern "trains de luxe." How many lovers of the beautiful in nature and art would not revel in scenery which even that of Switzerland does not excel; and examples of architecture and paintings by the old masters which have been coveted by almost every country in the world?

Thus does Mexico present herself today to



CHURCH CUERNAVACA, MEXICO

—Courtesy American Tourist Association

those who would prefer spending an occasional day or two in some quaint remote town, which has not been Americanized or Anglicized by even hotel, interpreter or guide with the constant and inevitable "extended palm." But all the charm of nativity preserved in the even tenor of its life and the natural courtesy of each inhabitant to all visitors. One could not say Mexico is not progressive, for one stroll along Avenida de San Francisco will quickly show how Mexico City has merited the name of the "Paris of America." There is wealth, fashion and gayety; elegant carriages and automobiles; hotels, ancient and modern, and your choice of nationality.

To the sight-seer there are scores of points of interest from the Palace of Chapultepec to the Thieves Market. To the student and art lover there is the National Museum and the National Academy of Fine Arts whose treasures are without price; to say nothing of dozens of both grand and quaint churches, with histories that thrill, and legends that charm. Among the almost equally notable pictures of the wonderful collection in the Academy of Fine Arts, there is a "San Juan de Dios," a

"San Rafael," a "San Juan en el Desierto," all by Murillo, also a "San Francisco," and a "San Antonio de Padua" that are attributed to that great artist. There is a portrait of "Rubens" and a "Christ Tormented," both by Rubens. There is a "Seven Virtues" on wood by Leonardo and a "San Sebastian" by Van Dyke; a portrait of Murillo by Vasquez.

Other cities likewise might boast of art treasures for in Guadalajara is a quite famous Murillo, the "Assumption," for which was refused an offer of \$75,000 gold. This is one of a number of paintings in the Cathedral, which is rich in other decorations. Queretaro's church of Santa Rosa possesses very valuable works of art, written about most interestingly by Charles Dudley Warner, "paintings that would attract attention anywhere," and wood carving of which he says, "I know of no church in the world so rich." The architectural beauty and the absence of recorded history of the ruined cities of Mexico afford an inexhaustible field of interesting study both to the traveler and research student. Mitla, some four hundred miles south of Mexico City, is most accessible of these, and not less attractive than others by any means.

Popocatepetl and Ixtaccihuatl may still remain in our memory of school day study of geography, as two of the highest mountain peaks of the world, but only by touring Mexico does one realize that the grandeur of other scenery in the Republic is quite as worthy of note as that of other countries as yet much more traveled.

Up to the present time most tours under escort have been made during the winter months, tho the climate of our own United States generally is not to be compared to Mexico in summer. Party tours are considerably preferable to independent travel, as many of the most interesting things to be seen are at places where such hotels as even the least exacting American traveler requires, are unknown; and the route traveled, tho it may be long, is without the comfort of sleeping cars—dining cars, never! Among the tours to be made this season, is the Nineteenth Annual Tour of all Mexico by special train under the direction of The American Tourist Association, which will leave Chicago, Tuesday, January 30th, and travel some four thousand miles within the borders of Mexico, and spending a week in Mexico City.

Among other places to be visited are Monterrey, Aguas Calientes, Zacatecas, Guajuato, Guadalajara, Queretaro, Puebla, Oaxaca, and the ruins of Mitla; Vera Cruz, Jalapa, Orizaba, San Luis Potosi and Tampico. At Tampico is such tarpon fishing as to attract lovers of the sport from all parts of the world, and La Barra beach, four miles away, affords ideal surf bathing, particularly in February. One leaves it rather reluctantly if he is headed for the northern states, after several weeks of unclouded sky, as blue as Italy's, and sunshine as balmy as southern France.



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"THE ANGELS OF BETHLEHEM"—BY AZAMBRE

—Courtesy St. Mary's College and Academy